

The
Diversions
of an
Autograph-Hunter
by J. H.

УНБА (2)



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THE
D I V E R S I O N S
OF AN
AUTOGRAPH-HUNTER.

FARMINGTON AVENUE,
HARTFORD, CONN.

By the test of double-
postage he shall
be tried!

Yours

Mark Twain.

May/91

THE
D I V E R S I O N S
OF AN
A U T O G R A P H - H U N T E R.

BY
J. H.

John Horne.

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P R E F A C E .

THE collecting of autographs, when honourably undertaken, is capable of becoming a delightful and educative recreation. It has been to the writer an interesting diversion amid the responsibilities of daily business, and he is full of gratitude to those who have contributed to his happiness. In the following pages he attempts to relate the story of his experiences, in the hope of affording entertainment to those who favour him with their attention ; and he trusts that this fact will be accepted as a sufficient apology for the unavoidably personal character of the style and matter.

· LOUISBURGH.

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*WHAT CERTAIN FOLKS THINK OF
THE AUTOGRAPH-HUNTER.*

“THE blessings of the Evil Genii, which are curses,
be upon him !”

EASTERN TALE.

IN the esteem of a certain class of people, the collector of autographs is an object of pity. His "weakness" is looked upon as threatening to his sanity and dangerous to his prospects. Others regard him with unconcealed jocularly, and make him a target for squibs and jokes. They, too, imagine him to be "cracked," but look upon his malady with less seriousness than their neighbours. In the same company, but more decided, are certain wrathful individuals who call down—or *up*!—fire and brimstone upon him. At the hands of the general crowd, too, he also suffers—indeed, no one suffers so thoroughly, unless it be the common hangman.

Lord Tennyson thought the autograph-hunter was infected with a species of "madness." Isaac Pitman hurls a four-page printed squib (part of which we purpose using) at his guilty head. Mr. Watts, the painter, curtly informs

him by printed leaflet that "he does not approve of the modern practice of collecting autographs"—and leaves him to his reflections. By means of a similar instrument, Mr. Chamberlain cuts him off with the lofty announcement that "he makes it a rule never to give his autograph." Some select and important personages in every profession hold themselves similarly out of the clutches of the terrible hunter, as though they were avoiding a plague; and the unsympathetic ignoramus brings up the rear by scornfully pronouncing the pursuit of collecting "a mere fad," and wishes himself free to kick roundly the unsuspecting hunter.

Nevertheless, he is not dismayed; indeed, if he be a wise man—and he is sure to be!—he will enter heartily into the fun and mischief of the proceedings. Even the solemn vengeance of indignant giants is regarded by him as an evidence of his importance—for would a lion rage to kill a fly? He may even go the length of enjoying the wrath of those who throw him off as they would a cur. In short, he cannot

be dismayed. Difficulties serve but to inflame his ambition. He ascends to the level of the heroic with every emergency ! Silence does not daunt him ; refusals do not discourage him ; scoldings do not chill him—all these, like the taunts of Fitz-James to Roderick Dhu, add but fuel to his resolve for revenge and victory !

But we are unequal to the task of doing his enterprize full justice ; besides, we are in danger of eulogising ourselves. We shall, therefore, allow another hand to finish the panegyrie. This we shall do by reproducing part of an article which appeared in the *Phonetic Journal* of March, 1882, and borrowed from an American newspaper. It has been issued in phonetic style, but for the sake of civilization we shall “translate” it, although some of the fun escapes in the process. (What man who desires to live long would undertake to sign the following “Form of aplikashon for membership in the Speling Leeg :”—“I aproov ov Reformed Speling, and engage tu yuze it on aul konvenient okazhonz. . . . Pleez reit distinktli. No

Aniual Subskription is rekweired.") As we are not connected with the "Speling Leeg ov aul fonograferz, speling reformerz, Profesors ov Etimoloji, Filoloji, and Langwaje," and as we do not wish to endanger the health of our readers, we reproduce the article in "plain English":—

"THE POWER OF BEING A NUISANCE.

"One of the forces not duly rated in this world is the power involved in making one's-self disagreeable. Emerson has written finely in favour of tact and the power of persuasion—how it makes its way through the world, obtains favours denied to princes and potentates, and lays tribute upon wealth and culture (kultiur!). Like the centurion, it can say to one man, Do this, and he doeth it; especially if it is a woman who says it! But, on the other hand, there is such a force in one's ability to carry a point by the simple process of making everybody uncomfortable until it is accomplished, that one may well pause in deciding the respective claims to superiority of those two very different sorts of talents. It is true that in the fable the sun made the traveller take off his cloak, whereas the wind made him draw it closer about him, and the story is told to illustrate the superiority of gentleness over bluster. But it is to be borne in mind that only by making itself disagree-

able and the traveller uncomfortable did the sun succeed.

“ The child who has lived long enough to scream, cry and kick, in order to call attention to its wants, and refuses to cease making a nuisance of itself until these are gratified, has already learned the potency of this lever in human affairs. The woman who, beginning an acquaintance with her persistent suitor, by a little wholesome aversion ends by marrying him ‘ in order to get rid of him,’ pays a practical and overwhelming tribute to the advantage arising from a capacity to make one’s-self an insufferable torment ! Women understand the infinite variety of possibilities that lie latent in this force. They know that by beginning early and being constant in attack there is nothing from a sealskin sack to a house with a mansard roof that is not possible to them ! The unjust judge realised it when, lest she should weary him by her continual coming, he avenged the unfortunate woman of her adversary. The book agent, the lightning-rod man, the life insurance solicitor, the hawkman, the beggar in rags and the beggar in broadcloth and silk, have taken the highest degree in this school of life.

“ But the autograph-hunter is the embodiment of it, and it is his crowning glory that few have attained the distinction of being cursed as he has been, for an unmitigated nuisance ; and has aroused, even in the breasts of the pious, thoughts that lie too deep, not only for tears, but for words not fit for polite society ! Yet it is in proportion to this supreme capacity for

making one's-self odious that the autograph-hunter exhibits, like the Indian, the trophies of his hunt.

“ One of those young fiends in Brooklyn has whole folios full of autograph scalps. His waking hours are devoted to the task of plotting against the peace and comfort of the great. Having no scruples and no humanity, he smiles at the refusal of his victims, knowing well that he has settled down upon them never to depart until he shall carry with him in triumph the plunder of his seeking. To his credit be it said, he is no respecter of persons ! Bismarck and the German Emperor are made to stand and deliver as well as Mark Twain and the sweet singer of Michigan ; Susan B. Anthony and Von Moltke as well as Mother Goose and H. B. Hayes. He has drawn autographs from people who have registered a vow before high heaven never to write another, though a Missouri train robber or a Newark bank cashier should threaten to take their all ! Queen Victoria has in vain invoked the protection of the English Constitution and the British Parliament, and Tennyson found it useless to set the dog on him, as he does to most American visitors. Eminent lawyers have pleaded for mercy as they have never pleaded for a verdict, but they have not always been let off with a short sentence ! Distinguished clergymen, at first excusing themselves on the ground that they were too engrossed in Holy Writ to furnish the secular sort, have yielded to the inevitable in order to escape eternal suffering in this world ! Even some Chicago people, so slow in subscribing to the relief

of others' miseries, have been obliged to relieve their own by subscribing themselves "Yours truly." Read the writer, and Wright the reader, fictionists and factionists, physicians and metaphysicians, popes and poets, judges and generals, novelists and nihilists, majors and minors, bond and free, bondholders and freeholders, rich and poor, have in the folios of this distinguished bore testified to the irresistible power of push and persistence !"

It is impossible for us to add anything to this glowing and flattering eulogium of the hunter, and we therefore humbly beg of the reader to excuse us from enlarging this chapter and to accompany us into the next.

THE PLEASURES OF COLLECTING.

“ THIS kind of pursuit cherishes youth, delights old age, is an ornament in prosperity and yields comfort in adversity, delights at home and hinders not abroad.”

TULLY.

IT is no easy task to write on the pleasures of collecting. The man who is ignorant of the pursuit is strongly disposed to label the enjoyment "a craze" and to dismiss it from his thoughts, while he who revels in it experiences the pleasures in a manner which words but coldly express. His is the lover's delight—who can well tie it to language ?

One of the chief delights of collecting is the revelation of disposition which it brings. I do not now refer to the meaning which may be concealed in the handwriting, but to the manner in which autographs are refused or sent. I believe it to be a very fair test of a man's disposition to ask him for his autograph. A self-important man, for instance, will pay no heed to the request ; on the other hand, a courteous but can't-be-bothered-with-such-insignificant-things kind of a person will politely

decline through a secretary ; while a sympathetic individual (pressure of business notwithstanding) will snatch a minute and oblige the applicant. Tennyson refused his autograph to all and sundry ; indeed, he was gloriously above taking any notice of an application.* Is not this consistent with his life-long practice of dodging the public gaze and declining to popularise himself with the crowd ? Ruskin acts in a precisely similar fashion. These are examples of the first class. Lord Rosebery may be taken as an example of the second. His secretary writes to say that Lord Rosebery, “ while fully conscious of the flattering nature of the request, regrets that he cannot comply with it, as he makes a rule not to intrude his handwriting on any collection of autographs.” “ Not *intrude* his handwriting ”—what a delicious refusal ! Who but Lord Rosebery could have invented such a “ buttered ” phrase ? The

* Among a collection of autograph letters recently sold was one from Tennyson to an old friend, in which, after referring to the many applications for his autograph sent to him, he says, “ I rather make it a point of neglecting them, for why should I flatter the madness of the people ? ”

Baroness Burdett Coutts' secretary replies to the same effect, but not so sweetly. Of the third class there are numerous striking instances. The Marquis of Lorne says :—"I have much pleasure in complying with your request." William Morris obliges one in this way :—"It seems curious that anybody should want autographs, but since you wish mine, here it is." Sims Reeves simply writes, "With pleasure. Yours most truly, J. SIMS REEVES." Here is a note from Whittier :—"Dear Friend, My friend Eliza Boyce tells me thee wishes my autograph, and for her sake as well as thine I comply with thy request, and am, very truly thy Friend, JOHN G. WHITTIER." There are many such. Who will deny that the readiness to oblige which characterises those last quoted does not indicate a sympathy with outsiders to which Tennyson and Ruskin never lent themselves? It is equally evident that the replies of Lord Rosebery and the Baroness Burdett Coutts evidence a desire to avoid too much standoffishness on the one hand and too much

familiarity on the other. "A man cannot speak [or write] but he judges himself," says Emerson. "With his will, or against his will, he draws his portrait."

The tastes of the writers are also made manifest in their letters. Take some of the R.A.'s as examples. Here is a characteristic note from Mr Thornycroft:—"Dear Sir, You will find it difficult to discover a greater admirer of Robert Burns than Yours Faithfully, HAMO THORNYCROFT." Mr Faed also thinks of Burns in connection with Scotland, and says he has pleasure for many reasons in obliging me, but mainly because of "my own beloved Robert Burns." Mr H. Stacey Marks reveals his eye for the curious by writing:—"Honoured Sir, How can I refuse a request made in so quaint and complimentary a manner? I have much pleasure in subscribing myself, Yours Faithfully, H. STACEY MARKS." I was not aware that I had written him in any quaint manner, but his humorous faculty had dis-

covered it somewhere. To take a specimen from another quarter—Professor Blackie replies with his usual fervour and heartiness, winding up by marrying a quotation in Greek from Paul with one in Scotch from Burns! Is not this the Professor in his glory? Many such notes and letters have I which bear unmistakable testimony to the tastes and leanings of the writers.

Even the way in which an autograph is conveyed is significant. Sir Frederick Leighton tore a slip from a sheet of paper and simply wrote his autograph upon it. Mr Gladstone subscribed his on the corner of the stamped envelope which I enclosed. In both cases it is evident that the senders were busy but would like to be obliging. There are others, again, who sent their autographs on sheets of well-made notepaper, with a considerable introduction. Sir Noel Paton, Sir Charles Russell, and many others, are instances. These apparently take time and care to their work. But I must not forestall myself, as I shall treat

of "How People Reply" in a future chapter. All this variety is full of meaning. Some of the writers are manifestly pleased at being asked for a specimen of their handwriting, and do not hesitate to thank you for the honour—this, too, from very unexpected quarters. Others appear to consider the whole affair tantalising, and throw the autograph at you on the back of your own letter. A select few seem to enter into the spirit of the transaction and send really interesting letters. Of these, Mark Twain, Ibsen, Spurgeon, Holman Hunt, Professor Blackie, President Cleveland, Birket Foster, and a host of others in all professions, are prominent.

There is also no small interest in studying the caligraphy of autographs. I do not believe that much can be gathered in detail from handwriting, any more than from phrenology; but as phrenology undoubtedly teaches something by the general outline of the head, so an inkling into the writer's nature is seen in the general

W. H. Adams C. H. Spang

G. H. Bonlang

Joseph Barker

Red. Brighton

Chas. Lang

Wm. Reeves

res. Reid

Henrik Olsen

Victoria Mary of Teck

St. L. Esch

W. H. Black

style of his caligraphy.* Who can look on Mr. Gladstone's autograph without seeing his secretiveness? It seems a series of closely connected strokes. The seven years' secret of the Home Rule Bill is prophesied here! The honesty and simplicity of Mr. Spurgeon are just as surely displayed in his round, open and matter-of-fact signature. It is impossible not to see the artist in the autograph of Walter Crane, or to miss the impressionist in General

* "Assuredly Nature would prompt every individual to have a distinct sort of writing, as she has given a peculiar countenance—a voice—and a manner."—*Isaac D'Israeli*.

Lady Mildred Boynton recently contributed an article to *Longman's Magazine* in which she contends that graphology has really something in it. "Take a family of children," she says, "three or four of them taught by the same teacher; at the age of fifteen each child will have developed a 'hand' of its own, possibly having a general likeness, but to a graphologist full of differences. . . . One can easily see the force of the reasoning that a man with a good opinion of himself and much self-confidence should write a large, bold hand; and an indolent man, a round, easy-looking one; and an active, energetic and irritable man, an angular and pointed one; the eloquent and talkative person makes big loops to his tall letters, the taciturn and secretive one none at all. The difficulty in reading off a character lies in the fact that natures are complex; some qualities apparently contradict each other—for instance, signs of impulse and of caution are frequently found in the same writing. Then it is necessary to look which of these two qualities predominates."

Boulanger's. All autographs are not so full of revelation, perhaps, as those I have instanced, but most of them invariably show something of the writers. Dr. Parker's signature is a better representation of him than any photograph, while that of Sir Frederick Leighton is "a speaking likeness."

The mention of Sir Frederick Leighton's autograph suggests to me what I may call art in caligraphy, the study of which is an added pleasure in collecting. Some autographs are pretty to look at, full of beauty in execution. Sir Frederick's is a striking example; one cannot help admiring it. Charles Bradlaugh's, too, is a work of art—original and artistic. That of Sims Reeves is beautiful and refined. Sir George Reid, President of Scotch Painters, has an after-flourish to his signature which is alive with the artistic. Mr. Ibsen's handwriting is almost like copper-plate—so even, open, deliberate and careful. Princess May's autograph is the only one among the ladies which at

all approaches the picturesque—it is well-formed and flowing, with a significant swing of the pen, and a flourish underneath. Those of Mrs. Kendal and Annie S. Swan come next to it. On the other hand, how miserably wretched is the scribble of M. de Lessepps,* Sir Wm. Harcourt, Mr. Balfour, Sir Wilfred Lawson, Professor Blackie,† Andrew Lang, and a few others! It is nothing short of a disgrace to civilization that educated men of the 19th century should be represented by such scrawlings. If, as Professor Drummond thinks, writing is one of the evolutionary stages from the state of savagery to civilization, some of our most advanced men are not so far removed from the barbarian as they may imagine!

Another pleasure I have found in connection

* M. de Lessepps sent me a card with some writing upon it, but what the interpretation of it is passes my knowledge. I have submitted it to several experts, and (with the exception of a word or two) they have pronounced it unreadable.

† The *Scottish Leader* recently affirmed that Professor Blackie had the distinction of writing the most illegible hand in Scotland.

with autograph collecting is, an added interest in those who favour me. After receiving their autographs, I instinctively feel interested in them, and, in some slight degree, associated with them. I become indebted to them, and this is the only way I can repay them. This has been a distinct gain to me, for it has increased my knowledge of many public persons and their labours; and it has been no loss to them, for in many cases (that of authors, for instance) I have purchased some of their works. Thus the transaction has been a profit both to giver and receiver. I am bound to say that the pleasure I have derived in this way has been most welcome. Since Whittier sent me his autograph, I have read every line he has written, and I shall ever be grateful for the influence which his writings have exercised over me. When I visit an art gallery, I look specially for pictures painted by those who have honoured me with their autographs; and in reading the speeches delivered in the House of Commons I give extra attention to the

utterances of my favourites on both sides of the House. I have gone to a concert more than once to hear the singer who was kind enough to give me a specimen of his hand-writing ; thus we have been both benefited. It comes to pass, therefore, that one of my chief pleasures in collecting has been a deepened interest in the movements and history of public persons, and that interest has supplied me with a motive for research in music, art, politics, literature, or whatever the life-work of my favourites may chance to be. Viewing autograph collecting in this light, I gladly own myself debtor.

The educative influence of autographs is one of the pleasures and also one of the rewards of collecting. I have mounted and framed my autographs, and they look at me from the walls of every room in the house. They preach silently, but eloquently ever—inspiring, delighting, warning me. I cannot look at the autographs of such persons as John Bright, Von Moltke, Henry Ward Beecher or his

illustrious sister Mrs Harriet Beecher Stowe, without feeling inspired to honour and nobility and unselfishness. Those of Mark Twain, P. T. Barnum, Harry Furniss, and a number of others, irresistibly suggest to me the humorous side of life. And what beacon fires are the autographs of Parnell, Boulanger and M. de Lessepps ! Then, how sacredly an autograph affects me after the writer dies and retires from the scene ! John Bright has gone, and Spurgeon, and Whittier, Beecher, Pettie, Von Moltke, Parnell, Boulanger, Derby, Bradlaugh, and a host of others. I now regard the autographs of these dead ones (given me during their lifetime) with peculiar veneration. They declare the shortness of time, the final end of all human greatness and glory. They are telling me to be ready for the last solemn hour ; they call on me to prepare for the company of the Silent !

I must not fail to mention yet another pleasure, viz., the delight of having so many great names about you in the house—these,

too, the handiwork of the very persons they represent. Great ones press you on every side, as in a library of books ; only that in a library the printer stands between you and the writer—here you have his own direct workmanship. The idea that all these great ladies and gentlemen have contributed to my delight and the beautifying of my home seems too good to be true, and makes me think kindly of human nature. When I come to give an outline of my various collections, it will be seen that the leading persons in almost every civilized nation have conspired to adorn my humble abode. This thought in itself is sufficient reward for the trouble of getting the autographs together, and it makes me think that nobler hands have wrought my pleasure here than those which have adorned the richly-furnished mansions of the great. Skilled craftsmen have been employed to adorn the dwellings of high-born and distinguished ladies and gentlemen, but those same exalted ones have themselves decorated mine ! Besides, as I have hinted, the presence

of these autographs demonstrates the kindness of human nature generally, irrespective of distinctions or inequalities—and this is no mean object-lesson.

ITEMS OF PREFERENCE.

“EVERY man in his humour.”

BEN JOHNSON.

THE collecting of autographs is not a modern invention, yet was I ignorant of the fact when I began the gentle art. I crave the indulgence of the reader for venturing to tell how it came about. During my student days at college a letter came to one of my companions, on a certain occasion, from an eminent preacher. After reading and answering the letter, my friend threw it into the waste-basket. I picked up the letter to look at the hand-writing of the famous man. After satisfying myself on that score, the impulse possessed me to keep it—why, I know not. So I laid it aside in my pocket-book. In course of time I became uncommonly familiar with it, and thought more kindly of the writer on account of it. Somehow I felt a pleasure in the knowledge of owning it—it was not everybody, I thought, who was so favoured. By and by, as was natural, I conceived the desire to become possessed of letters from other eminent personages.

I tried one, then another—and succeeded. Gradually I became an expert, and had quite a number of autographs. I was not then aware that there was a “trade” in autographs ; but I was not long until I made the discovery. Many of my best autographs, however, were secured during this period of innocency.

I have never purchased an autograph. That, to me, would blight the pure delight of collecting. Is not a collector popularly known as a “hunter?” How would a hunter of tigers feel if he presented his lady-love with a purchased animal shot to order by another? I have read of an angler who one day had very bad luck—not a nibble quickening his interest. On his sad way home, fearing to face his helpmeet with so much wasted time in his diary, he called at a fishmonger’s shop and enquired for some trout. Having settled about the price and quantity, he requested the dealer to string them together. This done, “Now, throw them to me,” said the man of the rod, “and I’ll *catch*

them!" Then, marching home with due flush of glory, he presented the fish to his smiling and admiring spouse as the day's *catch*! This buying process may be pardonable in such humiliating circumstances—especially when a man's reputation and skill are at stake!—but I am proof against the temptation in autograph-collecting. It is no doubt gratifying to know that autographs (and especially of worthies no longer alive) may be had for the purchasing, if required; but we humbly submit that the commercial element seriously interferes with the delightful pursuit of collecting. No; thanks to our friends the dealers, but we much prefer to catch our own fish! This procedure will doubtless appear somewhat stubborn in the eyes of certain collectors; but, Luther-like, "Here I stand!" Apart from the enjoyment and gratification of this sweet way, it is safe and satisfactory. Receiving the autographs so directly, there is no possibility of fraud or deception. The experience of Mr Kennedy, New York, with his Burns' MSS., is enough to

prejudice a collector against buying. Out of 202 MSS. purchased by him, only one turned out to be genuine !

Nor have I ever sold an autograph. I would consider it dishonourable to do so. If I am ever "on the rocks" financially, and compelled to sell out my belongings, my autograph collection shall be the last item to be parted with. I had better not crow too loudly, however, before I arrive at the stake ; but this I say, that I abhor the trafficking in autographs which many collectors seem to take a delight in and even to be proud of. I would no more sell an autograph after it came into my possession than Andrew Lang would sell a first edition of the "Pilgrim's Progress."

I am also gloriously indifferent to the prescribed ways and methods of preserving autographs. I have secured mine peculiarly for my own pleasure and delight, and no man shall have the right to say what I am to do with

them, or how I am to arrange them or in what manner they are to be preserved. I shall arrange them as best suits my loving fancy. One of the governing motives with me in collecting is respect for those who have favoured me with their autographs—guided by this, I assign a respectful place and arrangement to each. I have but two controlling principles, therefore, in collecting, arranging and preserving my autographs—these are, the gratification of my own pleasure, and due respect for those who contribute to my enjoyment.

It will thus appear that I am not only saved from falling into purely commercial and wooden methods on the one hand, but am also guarded against extreme craze on the other. The balance is perfectly sustained, for I only go so far as comfort and pleasure lead me—drawing up when these are endangered by over-anxiety or mania.* Autograph-collecting, like all other

* “Not to be addicted too much to any one thing, I take to be the most excellent rule of life.”—ONE OF THE ANCIENTS.

“fads,” may amount to a mania and become master instead of servant. Any recreation which develops into an uncontrollable passion becomes harmful to the person possessed by it and disagreeable to those around, as the following testifies :—Host (proudly, showing visitor over the house)—“And this painting is a masterpiece by Rembrandt.” Visitor—“Great Scot, man! What is that unsightly hole in the corner?” Host (crestfallen)—“Well, you see, my wife is an autograph collector, and she wouldn’t rest until she had cut out the signature and pasted it in her album!”

The method of arranging and preserving my autographs which I have adopted is that of mounting them in suitable frames, either singly or in groups. First of all, the autograph is gummed or pasted to a stout sheet of paper and pressed in a huge book. This is to make it stiff and give evenness of surface when done. Then a proportionate margin is marked off around it with ruler and pencil, after which a

mount is cut in stout cardboard the size of the outlined square. The sheet of paper is then fastened to the back of the mount, leaving the autograph (or letter, as the case may be) exposed. This is again pressed in a book, or on a table, to make the autograph adhere to the card. Thereafter the cut in the cardboard is carefully lined round the edges with ink, and the cardboard placed in a suitable frame and hung up. If a group of autographs is being formed, this is done with each name, the arrangement or order of the squares varying in each case, and the title of the group usually occupying the centre. I have invariably followed this plan, and find it very satisfactory. What I like it best for, perhaps, is that it allows the collector to *see* his autographs; and thus his pleasure is always before his mind. I object to the shutting up of autographs in a scrap album, although I appreciate the reason for it. I like to have my friends about me. The light may dim them somewhat in course of time, through being thus exposed; but I

question if I shall ever perceive much change in this direction. If I do, the pleasure of *seeing* my treasures will more than outweigh any grief I may have on that account. Then, autographs lend themselves gracefully to the purposes of house decoration when treated in this way, whereas they are useless for this or any other ornamental purpose when lying hid in a book. I am aware that their commercial value is perhaps affected by this mode of treatment, but then their pleasure-yielding value is greatly increased ; and, as I have noted elsewhere, the commercial element does not enter into my calculations. If a collector has risen above concern for the market, and views his pursuit purely as a charm and recreation, he cannot derive greater pleasure from them than by adopting this plan—arranging, grouping, framing, and hanging them according to the suggestions of his fancy. They thus become a constant pleasure to himself and an ornament to his home.

*THE GENTLE ART OF SECURING
AUTOGRAPHS.*

“WHAT boots it thy virtue?
What profit thy parts?
The one thing thou lackest
Is the art of all arts.

‘The only credentials,
Passport to success,
Opens castles and parlours—
Address, man, address.”

EMERSON.

IN autograph-collecting, as in all other pursuits, there is a right way of going about it, just as certainly as there is a wrong way. Many collectors are inconsiderate and abrupt in making their applications, with the result that they fail in their advances. Nevertheless, when it is rightly and thoughtfully gone about, few persons refuse to grant the simple request. I have had but few actual refusals—Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Isaac Pitman, Mr. F. G. Watts, Lord Rosebery, and Mrs. Burdett Coutts, alone have the distinction. I got Mr. Chamberlain's autograph, however, through the medium of a friend; I "bled" Mr. Pitman by scolding him (the only time I ever adopted such a course); and I left the others "alone with their glory." But I *must* get Lord Rosebery's! As I anticipated, Tennyson and Ruskin took no notice of my letters, and two or three others did likewise; but even this is better, though less polite,

than to use your own stamped envelope in sending you a curt printed slip to inform you that the party objects to granting autographs ! This is unquestionably "the most unkindest cut of all."

The first thing to be observed in soliciting an autograph, I might say for the sake of amateurs, is to write courteously and briefly. Abruptness is fatal, and also undue length. Remember that a favour is being asked ; do not hesitate to state briefly but sufficiently your knowledge of that fact, apologising the while for the intrusion. A letter written with due courtesy is almost sure to succeed, all other things being equal.

Perhaps the next point is not to ask the autograph too directly. You will stand a better chance of getting an autograph if you will simply indicate your desire than if you pointedly request the favour. "The longest way is sometimes the shortest way," in this as in most

matters. There is a way of securing your end by not appearing too anxious for it; on the other hand, care must be taken to show that the gift of the autograph would be a real favour and would be genuinely appreciated. The inventiveness of the applicant must devise sentences which preserve the balance. A well-balanced letter is "half the battle." A striking illustration of this may be given—that of Princess May (now Duchess of York). Her secretary enclosed her autograph with a letter saying that Her Serene Highness was overwhelmed with such applications, which it was impossible to consider, but that she made an exception in this case on account of "the charming letter" which conveyed the request. Her autograph came to me sometime after the death of the Duke of Clarence and prior to the announcement of her engagement to the Duke of York.

I certainly think that applicants for autographs ought to write honestly. I mean by

that—do not address persons otherwise than you honestly feel towards them. Even if dishonesty does not leak out in the letter, it degrades the applicant in his own eyes (if he be an honourable man) and spoils the pure pleasure of collecting. If you do not admire a man in all his interests, you may be able to admire some special work he has accomplished—state this guardedly, so as not to praise what does not really merit your approval. For instance, I desired to secure the autograph of Mr. Bradlaugh. I detested his atheism; but I admired, sincerely so, his political worth and straightforwardness, and I frankly told him so. It was *the politician's* autograph I wanted—and I got it.

In stating briefly and neatly his admiration of the person to whom he writes, the collector must be very careful not to over-flatter. One or two persons may be “drawn” by high-sounding phrases, but the vast majority will see through the dodge. If you are genuinely enthusiastic about an individual, you must

control yourself and write solidly and sensibly. The person only knows you through your letter, so be careful to avoid extremes. Let your sentiments find expression in easy, delicately-expressed language. More depends upon the manner in which you express yourself than upon what you write. Authors and literary men especially measure the applicant by the revelation which he makes of himself in his composition and phraseology ; indeed, all educated men know the touch of an intelligent and appreciative correspondent, and it is the presence of this indefinable something which mainly procures success. The majority of men, I may add, while suspicious of trickery and disliking flattery, treat with wonderful kindness an honest, courteous, and intelligent appeal.

An autograph, as all men know, may sometimes be secured by making an enquiry. Some collectors have bagged Mr. Gladstone's in this way—inquiring if a certain report of a speech

he delivered is accurate in given details ; while others have so raised the ire of Mr. Ruskin by soliciting a subscription for a church that he has angrily replied. Such tactics, however, are unworthy of honest collectors. I never tried a move after that order but once, and I have been sorry for it ever since, and glad that I failed. At the same time, you may really desire to ask a question or make a suggestion to some one ; and when this is the case, I see no reason why the occasion should not be seized to procure an autograph. I remember once being curiously exercised over some pages of fac-simile bindings in one of Andrew Lang's books ("The Library"). How *could* they have been reproduced so accurately and handsomely ? Truth to tell, I wanted Mr. Lang's autograph ; yet it is also true that I was much more anxious to know how such splendid fac-similes could be produced. I resolved to write a kindly note and ask him. I did so, and thus I got my curiosity satisfied, and an autograph (enclosing an explanatory letter from Mr.

Frederick Macmillan, the publisher,) to boot. When a genuine reason such as this impels one to write, it seems quite honourable to take opportunity of it; but to feign a difficulty in order to secure an autograph is dishonest and unsatisfactory. Many collectors, however, view the matter differently, and do not hesitate to adopt this means of adding to the number of their treasures. A successful autograph-hunter recently wrote his "Confessions" for the columns of *The Cosmopolitan*, and he unblushingly admitted that he secured nearly all his autographs in this way.

During his recent travels in America, Mr. Walter Besant discovered a new dodge of the unscrupulous hunter. He writes to his victims something after this style:—"May I trouble you, my dear Sir, to send me the present address of your aunt, Mrs. Maria Brown (sister to Thomas Carlyle), if she is still living? I might obtain her address elsewhere, but in order to save time I address you personally. Thanking you in advance," etc. The author is

naturally gratified at being thought a nephew of the sage of Chelsea. He writes off a kindly note of explanation to say that he has not that honour, however, and thus falls into the hunter's snare ! A person who can adopt tactics of this sort, and yet unblushingly look honest men in the face, is educating himself for the company of criminals. Tricks of this kind have so injured collecting that public men know not how to divine between an honest letter and a dishonest one ; consequently they are on guard, and only answer letters which are imperative. But for these unmanly dodges, autograph collecting would be a pleasure both to the sender and receiver.

Occasionally an autograph may be secured through the medium of a second party. I secured Mr. Chamberlain's in this way. He refused my application ; but I ultimately secured his autograph through the medium of a town councillor who presided at one of his meetings. Several of the politicians' autographs

which I possess were “bagged” through the medium of secretaries of political associations and clubs,* and I became owner of Mr. Edison’s through the kindness of one of his travelling agents. I have also resorted to the help of a second party when I desired to procure duplicate autographs for some special purpose. Sometimes, too, one may desire the autograph of a person whom he cannot honestly praise, and he may save his conscience, while receiving the autograph, by this plan. I do not quite approve of this, for if a man has nothing worthy of admiration why should we desire his autograph? Yet a case may arise where curiosity, and not admiration, is the real motive of request, and this is the “ruling passion” of many collectors. Apart from any consideration of this kind, the collector will be wise to employ

* One of Mr. Gladstone’s autographs which I possess came to me through the secretary of a Liberal Club. He secured it from an M.P. It was torn from the end of a letter and revealed the last line of the missive, which was the following startling, significant pronouncement:—“There is no use in a *squash* (!)—Yours sincerely, W. E. GLADSTONE.”

a second agent when it can conveniently be done, as a person is more likely to give his autograph to one he knows (however slightly), or whose official position entitles his request to respect, than to an unknown applicant. An editor will sometimes oblige a collector with the autograph of some of his contributors (in this way I secured a post-card of Mr. Gladstone's from the editor of "Good Words" and a letter of Canon Liddon's from Mr. Stead); the Member of Parliament of your district will often secure the autographs of leading statesmen on the same side of the House as himself—and so on. If the collector is married—who said that marriage was a failure!—he will act wisely in getting his wife to apply for the autographs of ladies. Women, I have found, make freer with one of their own sex than with a gentleman.

I have discovered that autographs are easy to get during the holiday season. I suppose the explanation of this is that folks are in a

more generous mood when holidaying than when seriously harnessed to work. There are some, of course, who avoid trouble of all description during their holidays, and who swear undying vengeance on all who intrude upon their enjoyment; but all men have more or less of correspondence during even their most sacred holidays, and, granted the free-and-easy mood of vacation, they will not find it difficult to favour an application for their autograph. Perhaps, too, they are pleased at the acquaintance with their movements which your letter infers. Having discovered this fact, I largely acted upon it. I read the personal items in the daily papers. These paragraphs usually inform the public of the place where noted people are spending a few days, what locality is receiving an official visit from them, and so on. In the case of those visiting a town publicly—distinguished men receiving honour, Members of Parliament responding to an invitation to address another constituency than their own, etc.—I have never in a single

instance failed. He would be a stoney man, indeed, who would not be condescending in such circumstances !

It is very desirable that only the best note-paper should be used. Shabby, thin, or common note-paper should never be employed—it throws “the wet blanket” on an application.

One last hint—always enclose a stamped envelope, or a stamp. A stamp alone is the better idea, as it gives you the envelope also in the handwriting of your benefactor. I have a large and most interesting collection of such envelopes, with which I may some day paper a room in my house. (If the envelope should come from an author, you can paste it inside any volume of his which you may possess, and the book is straightway enhanced by the presence of your own name in the author’s handwriting.) While this gives the person who replies more labour, it is nevertheless a wise procedure, for the envelope you

enclose (unless a large one) may not be suitable for his note-paper, and he may decline the trouble of taking off the stamp and re-fixing it. On the whole, therefore, it seems the better way to enclose a stamp only. At the same time, it is a risk, as many will send an autograph if the envelope is addressed who will not take the trouble to decipher your name and address and transfer them to an envelope.

When I began collecting many years ago it was not the rage it now is, and autographs were not so difficult to secure. The collector of to-day must not be over-sanguine ; nevertheless, if he goes warily to work, his successes may surprise and delight him. The very uncertainty of his ventures will add to the excitement of the chase. If he is fresh to the pursuit, his confidence also will come to his aid, for, as Horace observes—

“To court the great ones, and to soothe their pride,
Seems a sweet task to those that never tried.”

The amateur must not be discouraged if his first attempts are largely failures. Refusals should inflame him to more resolute endeavour, like a true lover. An occasional success, however, will prevent absolute hopelessness and surprise him into renewed daring. He must not be faint-hearted—nor too expectant. His education is a matter of time.

HOW PEOPLE REPLY,

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L I N E S

WRITTEN FOR INSERTION IN A COLLECTION OF HAND-
WRITINGS AND SIGNATURES MADE BY MISS PATTY,
SISTER OF HANNAH MORE.
MARCH 6, 1792.

“IN vain to live from age to age,
While modern bards endeavour ;
I write my name in Patty's page,
And gain my point for ever.”

W. COWPER.

AS we have already observed, one of the pleasures of a collector is the variety of ways in which the senders of autographs reveal themselves while favouring his request. Without attaching much importance to this, it is nevertheless full of interest.

A considerable number of persons simply write their name on a slip of paper. Sir Frederick Leighton obliged me in this fashion. His great rival, Sir John Millais, did likewise. General Wolseley, Professor Max Müller, Henry George, Paderewski, Mr. Balfour, Dr. Stainer, "General" Booth and a multitude of others adopted the same method.

I received not a few autographs on neat cards—usually visiting cards, with the signature written on the back. Von Moltke, General Boulanger, Johann Strauss, Dr. Talmage, the Countess of Aberdeen, Mrs.

Spurgeon and Madame Belle Cole chose the card, with one or two others.

A select number wrote their simple autograph on a sheet of excellent note-paper, such as Princess May, H. Rider Haggard, Harry Furniss, Prof. Huxley, Mr. Parnell, Miss Braddon, Dr. Joachim, Mrs. Kendall, Annie S. Swan, Jean Ingelow, Kate Greenaway, Sir Edwin Arnold, and a great many more.

Several individuals sent their autographs accompanied with a quotation or sentence. Sir Noel Paton characteristically flung in the following quotation:—"An idle man is the barrenest piece of earth on the globe." Ferdinand Rothschild wrote, "All places that the eye of Heaven visits are to the wise man port and happy haven (Richard II)." Dr. Russell, the war correspondent, glowed heroically with "Rule Britannia!" The Rev. Dr. Dale, of Birmingham, added, "*Da quod jubes et jube quod vis.*" Archdeacon Farrar began,

“*Houtos grapho*” (in Greek), then added his signature. Dr. Talmage gave, “Until the day break and the shadows flee away.” Mr Wilson Barrett played Hamlet—“And the rest is silence.” Mr. Bancroft startled me with this warning :—“For a pint of honey thou shalt here likely find a gallon of gall.” Professor Godet gracefully informed me (in French) that “Every success not followed by an act of humiliation leads to a defeat.” Sir Andrew Clark followed up this advice (in Latin, however), by reminding me that “The life of Life is labour.” Amongst ladies, Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe shone hopefully with “Trust in the Lord and do good.” Miss Willard declared with becoming emphasis that “Only the Golden Rule can bring the Golden Age.” Mary Davies, the vocalist, stunned me by an old Welsh quotation, “Y gwir yn erbyn y byd” (The truth against the world).* Edna Lyall called

* With reference to this old Welsh motto, I may quote an amusing paragraph from a recent issue of the *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald*. It turns upon a slight misprint, and is as follows :—“The motto of the Welsh

Latin to her aid, and gave me as a motto, "*Pro Christo et Patria.*" These sentences and quotations, while adding proverbial lore to the collector's stock, also show somewhat the trend of the writers' fancies. They are thus doubly interesting.

Others added a line or two. "I am pleased to be able to oblige you in so small a matter" wrote Mr. Pettie, R.A., good humouredly ; and Sir John Collier, with equal goodwill, added, "You are heartily welcome to my autograph." M. Pasteur thanked Monsieur for his "amiable lettre," and subscribed his name. Mr. Ibsen's note runs :—

"Arede herre, gerne opfylder jeg Deres ønske og sender Dem denne prøve po min handskrift.

"HENRICK IBSEN."

Woman's Federation is '*Y gwir yn erbyn y byd*' (The Truth against the World). But alas ! for the accuracy of the English-Welsh lady who presided over the destinies of the programme of the meeting in London. The headline read as '*Y gwyr yn erbyn y byd*' (The *husbands* against the world !)—a statement revolting to every true woman suffragist !"

Mr. Toole wrote :—

“With pleasure I send my autograph as you wish.—Yours truly,

“J. L. TOOLE, ‘Walker London.’”

Mary Anderson “finds a pleasure” in favouring me. Jean Ingelow and Annie S. Swan were similarly courteous. Indeed, it is pleasing to be able to affirm that the great majority of those who were kind enough to grant my prayer took occasion to say that it gave them pleasure to do so.

In several instances the writers delighted me with letters of some length. Mr. Birket Foster (to whom I wrote sincerely thanking him for the interest his plates in Thomson’s “Season’s” had been to me) gave me quite a royal letter in reply. He wrote :—

“DEAR SIR,—One of the greatest rewards an artist has is the knowledge that he has given pleasure to others. Thomson’s ‘Seasons’ was always a favourite of mine, and I remember the pleasure I had in trying to realise some of the scenes he painted so beautifully in words.” [He then gives a little

reminiscence of Tennyson (who had just died) which I cannot withhold.] “In the last walk we had together, he said, as we were walking through a dark clump of trees, ‘Does it ever strike you as a landscape painter that going through an avenue of trees with light beyond is like going through the grave into Eternity?’ With many thanks for your kindness in writing me, very faithfully yours,

“BIRKET FOSTER.”

Mr Isaac Pitman also favoured me with a long letter, but under amusingly-different circumstances. I had written for his autograph, and in return had received a squib on “hunters” (quoted in our first chapter), accompanied by a printed slip to the effect that he was too busy to be troubled with such requests. I entered into the fun of the business, and resolved to “bleed” him for his insult ! So I wrote again extending my sympathy to him as the hardest-worked man on earth, as Mr. Gladstone, Mr Spurgeon, President Cleveland, and all the world’s most laborious workers had found time to treat my innocent request kindly ! In reply, back came a letter of two full pages, written in

phonetic style! After explaining that my former letter was answered by a "klark" and did not come from himself, he added—

"Not tu apear unkourtius, I wil say that I luk at the giving ov autografs thus—If I send mei autograf tu everie aplikant the numbers wil inkreas everie year, and the interrupshon ov mei desk-work bei theze leterz—though I hand the autografs to a jiunior klark to be adrest—wud be a serius drawback upon the wurk ov the day.

"EIZAK PITMAN."

I know too much not to understand this practical view of the matter, but a small part of a day spent in innocent obligations could not harm anybody, although, of course, the line must be drawn somewhere. Life was never intended to be all business.

When I wrote to Mark Twain I said that, as I could not enclose a stamped envelope, I would be glad to pay double postage on his letter when it arrived. The majority of Americans to whom I wrote either generously affixed a sufficient stamp to the envelope or "split the

difference" with me by attaching a stamp of half the necessary value, but Mark took me at my word. He covered the front page of his notepaper with this device, reproduced in fac-simile for our frontispiece :—

“ By the test of double postage he shall be tried !

“ Yours truly,

“ MARK TWAIN.”

The envelope enclosing this blood-thirsty announcement was the strangest I ever received. In the upper left-hand corner were printed the words, “ If not delivered within fourteen days, please return to S. L. CLEMENS, Connecticut, U.S.A.” Written across the end of the envelope was the following order to the official :—“ Will the postmaster kindly see that this letter is forwarded to the proper address ? ” The “ proper address ” was—“ Mr J. H., Ayr, Scotland, Great Britain, Europe,” and was written *twice*. Letter and envelope were gloriously Twainian. I consider all this very good of the genial humorist, as he said lately that

people had no more right to expect an answer in writing from him than they had to expect a physician to present a corpse to a friend as a remembrance !

I may introduce here the letter before referred to which I received from Professor Blackie. I sent him a note of congratulation on his birthday—not to secure his autograph, however, for I already possessed it. Here is his reply :—

“DEAR SIR,—Thanks ! for your kindly sympathy. *Plerama nuao e agape*, as St. Paul has it, or ‘the heart’s aye the part aye that maks us right or wrong,’ as Robbie Burns has it.—Sincerely yours,
“J. ST. BLACKIE.”

In the under left-hand corner of the envelope the Professor inscribed his usual motto, “*alethenon en agape*.” This quotation, I believe, is written on every envelope which the Professor sends out. I received another letter from him not long ago relative to the use of the Scotch language in preaching, in which he says :—

“Though Scotch has lost its position (in this respect unlike Gaelic) as the organ of serious appeal on the highest stage, the Christian pulpit—and this is a matter ruled by association rather than by principle—yet the very fact that the native dialect seldom or never appears on the most elevated platforms gives it an advantage when it does appear and is presented with tact and power. *Magna est Natura et praevalabit.* Nature will never fail the man who learns to use her wisely.”

The veteran missionary of the New Hebrides, Dr. J. G. Paton, gave me quite a history of his marvellous and heroic work. I am sure that the following quotation will be of interest to everybody :—

“Last year one of our missionaries baptized 433 adults. He has now 774 church members, and about 2000 professed converts ; 26 schools, with over 1500 in attendance—and all taught by teachers of his own training from those who eleven years ago were all cannibals. Another of our missionaries in eleven years has also about 2000 converts, and a third in

eight years has about 1000. These are at present our most encouraging stations, but at all we have most gratifying success." [He closes by a glowing reference to a visit paid Mr. Spurgeon when I happened to be present, and then subscribes himself, "Yours faithfully,

"JOHN G. PATON."]

Among several letters which I received from Mr. Spurgeon is one written to me on his death-bed, within a few days of his decease. The writing has all the striking features of his hand—singular clearness, regularity and flow. How one so busy could take time to write with such ease and beauty as characterize Mr. Spurgeon's letters is a puzzle to me. I may insert a quotation from this last letter, showing his "ruling passion strong in death" against the "Down grade" movement, as he termed it. This is how he finishes his letter:—

"Connection with Baptist Unions I cannot commend to anyone. I could not remain in the English Union, and hence you know my view about it. Whether the Scotch Union is distinct and free from error, I cannot say. It seems to me that in these evil days the fewer entanglements we have the better.—Yours most lovingly,

"C. H. SPURGEON."

Here is a characteristic note from Mr. Labouchere which I may venture to quote, written during the fiery fight of the last General Election :—

“I trust that the sturdy Scots will make it clear to Mr. Chamberlain that they do not understand any one calling himself a Radical and supporting a Tory Coercion Bill, which will last until the House of Lords agree to abrogate it. We look to Scotland to stand firm and to hold to the true faith.—Yours truly,

“H. LABOUCHERE.”

Dr. Lyman Abbot (Mr. Beecher’s successor) wrote this honourable note :—

“DEAR SIR,—I am glad of an opportunity to acknowledge my own debt and that of my land and church to the land of Burns, Bruce, Wallace, Walter Scott, and John Knox.—Yours sincerely,

“LYMAN ABBOT.”

I ought not to forget the letter I received from Mr. Holman Hunt. I wrote to him asking the favour of his autograph, and addressing my letter to Bond Street, where some of his paintings were then being exhibited. His man

of business there opened my letter, and coolly sent me a circular, advertising his wares ! Mr. Hunt came to know of it, and very kindly wrote to me at once as follows :—

“ DEAR SIR,—In forwarding your note of the 22nd inst., I learn that the business man in Bond Street replied in a tone that was certainly too characteristic of a cute man of the craft.” [He did, Mr. Hunt !]
“ As you desire a specimen of my handwriting, I have pleasure in meeting your wish, and am,

“ Yours obediently,

“ W. HOLMAN HUNT.”

Joaquin Miller’s epistle must not be overlooked. It demands publicity on account of the fact that it exhibits the Californian poet’s well-known defiance of all the rules of spelling :

“ DERE SIR,—My father’s family is of Glasgow—some genertions back. Besides, I have livd at Ayer. There is, or was, a Mr. Campbell, a merchant in Ayer, who may remember me.—Yours truly, •

“ JOAQUIN MILLER.”

Sir George Grove seemed to have contemplated the possibility of deception in some

shape or other,* for he sent his autograph in this assuring style:—

“ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC.

“DEAR SIR,—I assure you that the signature below is mine, and that there is no deception in the matter.—Yours Faithfully,

“GEORGE GROVE.”

There are many other specimens among my collections, but I must not occupy more space with them. A quotation or two from the letters of ladies, however, may be added. The first is from Madame Antoinette Sterling, in which occurs this fine paragraph:—“In God have I my hope, my strength, my light. Thou art my Mother-God: Thou shalt mother me into strength in all things and into well-being”—and other paragraphs full of the same devout and lofty sentiments. Mrs. Henry Ward Beecher, replying to my letter requesting her husband’s autograph, says:—“Almost every mail for the last three sad years has brought

* I have read of an American actor who employed a clerk to write his autographs in fac-simile—the said clerk answering all applications without troubling his master!

many similar requests. So large has been the call for my husband's autograph that very few are left which we could possibly spare. I send you his signature taken from a letter ; but many we are obliged to disappoint." This "run" on Mr. Beecher's autograph is easily explained by his unique standing as a preacher and his prominence in American history. Lady Florence Dixie concludes her letter just as she would be expected to conclude it—with an assurance of her readiness to labour for any cause which is for the well-being of her fellow-creatures and her country.

Some other ladies also favoured me with quotations ; to these I shall refer in the next chapter—"A Few Unique Contributions."

A FEW UNIQUE CONTRIBUTIONS.

“FOR AN AUTOGRAPH.

“THOUGH old the thought and oft exprest,
'Tis his at last who says it best—
I'll try my fortune with the rest.

“Life is a leaf of paper white,
Whereon each one of us may write
His word or two, and then comes night.

“Greatly begin ! though thou have time
But for a line, be that sublime—
Not failure, but low aim, is crime !

“Ah, with what lofty aim we came !
But we forget it, dream of fame,
And scrawl, as I do here, a name.

“JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.”

I HAVE been made the recipient of some items of correspondence which hardly come under the head of letters—verses of poetry, bits of music, etc.

Whittier enclosed this sweet verse from one of his poems—"Lines inscribed to Friends under arrest for treason against the Slave Power":—

God's ways seem dark, but, soon or late,
They touch the shining hills of day ;
The evil cannot brook delay,
The good can well afford to wait.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

Oliver Wendell Holmes also indited a verse from his poem, "The Last Leaf." It runs as follows :—

And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree,
In the spring ;

Let them smile as I do now
At the old forsaken bough,
Where I cling.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.*

I wish I could reproduce some of my musical curiosities. Dr. Mackenzie very kindly sent me the following line from "The Dream of Jubal," with its music written by himself, "O Music, scarce inspired of all!"

Mons. Alex. Guilmant, the French composer, favoured me with a line of Sarabande; Mr. Eugene Ysaye, the great Belgian violinist, contributed a line of music from Bach; and Mr. Bernhard Stavenhagen, the pianist, presented me with another, as also did Dr. Richter. In every case, of course, the autographs accompanied the contribution.

Mr. Andrew Black wrote a sentence from the "Messiah," set to its music—"Why do the nations rage so furiously? Why do the people

* The genial doctor lately wrote the above verse on the fly-leaf of a presentation volume to Mr. Edmund Goose. Mr. Shorter was also made the recipient of a similar volume. It would thus appear that this verse is a favourite with the author.

envy?" Mr. Iver Mackay followed with—"And you'll remember me," also accompanied with music.

Mr. Sankey obliged me with a sheet of music, containing a hymn he had just composed, with his autograph at the top.

Signor Piatti acted heroically. He took the heading of my note-paper and set it to music! It runs :—

"The steps of Faith
Fall on the seeming void, and find
The rock beneath."

I possess one of Mr. Spurgeon's original outlines—a sheet with his notes of an address delivered in 1890. It is a finely arranged outline on the educative influence of the presence of Christ. The interjected pencil-jottings, put down either on the way to the meeting or before rising to speak, are very interesting. In the upper left-hand corner, walled off by a square from the matter of the address, are the words "See well." This evidently means that he intended getting near

some window or light either to see his notes or allow the audience to see the speaker. The following are the main points :—

Sometimes our walk is in the dark. Faith.
We are not dependent upon light but upon Christ.
He is with us :—

1, FOR EDUCATION.

Obedience towards God. }
Sympathy towards men. } *Pub. up at night.*

2, FOR USEFULNESS.

He to atone : we to bring in. [*My desertion.*
„ „ : we to instruct. [*New lease.*
God not changed—“Sun blown out.”

3, FOR THE GLORY OF GOD. Faith.

Can our faith stand ?
Believing prayer succeeding. [*My father.*
Failure coming in, if not.

The furnace.
Light a danger.

I have also an envelope of the Post-office Jubilee sent to me by Mr. Spurgeon with my name and address, and his autograph in the left-hand corner at the bottom.

Mr. Eiffel favoured me with his autograph on the leaf of a book containing splendid photographic illustrations of the various stages through which his wonderful Tower passed in reaching completion.

The undernoted curious contribution came from the pawky author of "Self Help." The entire "letter" runs thus :—

Stranger—"It's very rainy to-day."

Boy—"Ay, it's a wee bit saft."

Stranger—"Does it always rain here?"

Boy—"Na, it sometimes snaws!"

SAMUEL SMILES.

Among these unique notes of which I am very proud is one from Mr. Walter Crane. It contains a verse from the author's rare production, "The Sirens Three," and is as follows :—

I saw regenerate Man, as stainless, free—

A child again on Mother Nature's Knee;

His wistful eyes did scan the starry spheres,

His hand outstretched to Life's new flowering tree.

WALTER CRANE.

The possession of the antique handwriting with

which our Art Magazines have made us so familiar renders this contribution peculiarly pleasing.

I am no less proud of a verse—on beautiful notepaper — from the gifted authoress of “Swallow Flights :”—

The Lily bends to mine her nun-like face,
 But my wild heart is beating for the Rose :
 How can I pause to heed the Lily's grace ?
 Shall I repent me by-and by ? Who knows ?

LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON.

Miss Rossetti may fittingly conclude the poetical jottings :—

BRIGHTON, *Sep.* 4, 1893.

Does the road wind up-hill all the way ?
 Yes, to the very end !

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

With compliments and good will.

On the evening of her appearance at Sims Reeves' farewell concert in the Royal Albert Hall, Christine Nilsson (the Countess de Miranda) delighted me with a beautiful, large-

sized card, which I prize very highly. It is inscribed thus :—

In kind remembrance.

CHRISTINE NILSSON,

Csçe. de Casa Miranda.

May 1891.

I have ever been a most devoted admirer of Whittier. When he died, I wrote a letter of sympathy to Mrs. Pickard, the poet's niece and housekeeper. In replying to my letter, and enclosing an autograph of her uncle's, she very generously presented me with the pen "long and last used," by Mr. Whittier. Among the many rarities I possess—books, stamps, and almost every description of curiosity—I prize none more highly than this pen of the venerable Quaker. When I received it, I was inspired to give it a trial in composing poetry, and this is what resulted :—

ON RECEIVING WHITTIER'S PEN.

A feather dropt from a singing bird—

Soft at my feet it fell ;

The bird sped on—as a spoken word—

O'er woody mount and dell.

Oft times in his free and swinging flight
 This swept him to the stars—
Had in the wing of his bounding might—
 Chanting his raptur'd bars !
Though far the bird in the summer sky
 Or winter winds may sing,
He hath left with me, who cannot fly,
 A quill from his soaring wing !
If down he droops to his welcome rest—
 Night-caught and weary of flight—
This hints of day that beat on his breast
 And the western sunset light !
It speaks of the plains where heroes lie,
 Of fields where the bird notes rang,
Of the singer sweet in the sunlight high
 And the wondrous things he sang !

Several other curios came to me quite unexpectedly to gladden my heart. I esteem them all very highly. If the senders derived half the delight in giving them that I experienced in receiving them, their kindness was its own reward. Nothing would constrain me to part with their kindly and curious gifts.

SOME AUTOGRAPH GROUPS.

“ Oh, what a friendly genius, pent
In narrow space, is here.”

HORACE.

AS before recorded, nearly all my autographs are mounted and framed. I may now add that they are arranged in separate groups. I did not at first aim at securing autographs for classification; but as they accumulated, they naturally arranged themselves in my drawer after a given order—authors, preachers, etc. This suggested the grouping of them in frames.

The largest group I have embraces all professions and nationalities. It distinguishes itself by the title of “The Worthies of the World,” carefully printed with the pen in the centre of the group. It embraces the following medley of names. Below the group, on an outer margin, I have written the signatures in index fashion, adding a more or less appropriate title after each name. As these titles may relieve

the monotony of the list and afford some amusement, I affix them :—

- 1 John Bright—The Advocate of Peace.
- 2 P. T. Barnum—The World's Entertainer.
- 3 President Cleveland—America's Twice-loved Favourite.
- 4 Sir Charles Russell—The Model Lawyer.
- 5 G. Eiffel—France's Architect in Iron.
- 7 W. E. Gladstone—The "Grand Old Man."
- 8 M. de Lesseps—The Suez Canal Hero.
- 9 J. Sims Reeves—The Songster.
- 10 John G. Whittier—America's Quaker Poet.
- 11 Sir Andrew Clark—The Royal Physician.
- 12 Lord Aberdeen—Canada's Chief.
- 13 Ferdinand Rothschild—The Money King.
- 14 Rev. C. H. Spurgeon—The Prince of Preachers.
- 15 Harry Furniss—The Caricaturist.
- 16 Dr. Wylie—The Champion of Protestantism.
- 17 Professor Max Muller—The Exponent of Language.
- 18 General Boulanger—France's would-be Emperor.
- 19 Oliver Wendell Holmes—The Physician Author.
- 20 Chas. S. Parnell—Ireland's Fallen Idol.
- 21 Johann Strauss—The Master of Merry Music.
- 22 Joaquin Miller—The Poet of the Sierras.
- 23 "General" Booth—The Modern Crusader.
- 24 Dr. Russell—King of War Correspondents.
- 25 Fredijof Nansen—Norway's "North Pole" Star.
- 26 D. L. Moody—The World's Evangelist.

-
- 27 Captain Casati—Italy's Stanley.
 - 28 Lord Coleridge—The High Priest of Law.
 - 29 Thomas Edison—The King of Inventors.
 - 30 Wm. T. Stead—The Editor of Editors.
 - 31 M. Pasteur—The Conqueror of Hydrophobia.
 - 32 Von Moltke—Germany's Warrior Hero.
 - 33 Marquis of Lorne—The Peasant Prince.
 - 34 Sir Noel Paton—Scotland's Knight of the Brush.
 - 35 Eizak Pitman—"The Father of Shorthand."
 - 36 Thomas Huxley—The Evolutionist.
 - 37 Dr. John G. Paton—The Modern Moffat.
 - 38 General Wolseley—"England's only General."

"Our Political Leaders" are arranged together in sweet confusion and unity thus :—

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 W. E. Gladstone | 8 Lord Salisbury |
| 2 Sir Randolph Churchill | 9 Sir G. O. Trevelyan |
| 3 John Bright | 10 Lord Spencer |
| 4 Sir Wm. Harcourt | 11 Mr Balfour |
| 5 Lord Derby | 12 Lord Hartington |
| 6 Mr Chamberlain | 13 Mr Morley |
| 7 Sir M. H. Beach | 14 Mr Goschen |

It is some time since this group was collected and arranged, and it now stands in need of enlargement. I have the autographs of several other politicians to add to the list of our "Leaders."

"Eminent Painters" (confined to Britain) is a fine selection. I have scattered small water-

colour sketches of my own out and in between the autographs, which give them a pleasing appearance. The group comprises :—

1 Sir John Millais	13 J. Calcott Horseley
2 Sir Frederick Leighton	14 Briton Riviere
3 Sir Noel Paton	15 Sir George Reid
4 L. Alma Tadema	16 W. W. Ouless
5 Sir John Collier	17 Sir John Gilbert
6 H. Stacey Marks	18 Thomas Faed
7 John Pettie	19 Jas. C. Hook
8 W. Holman Hunt	20 Marcus Stone
9 Thos. Sidney Cooper	21 J. M ^c Whirter
10 Frank Dicksee	22 Birket Foster
11 J. H. Hodgson	23 Luke Fildes
12 W. P. Frith	24 Philip H. Calderon

I have left room for the addition of a few more names in this group, as in “Our Political Leaders.”

Next comes the group of “Famous Singers,” which exhibits the following names :—

1 Madame Albani	11 Margaret Macintyre
2 Madame Nordica	12 Mary Davies
3 Madame C. Nilsson	13 J. Sims Reeves
4 Madame A. Trebelli	14 Edward Lloyd
5 Madame Belle Cole	15 Andrew Black
6 Jessie M. MacLachlan	16 Robert Kennedy
7 Nikita	17 G. Henschel
8 Madame A. Sterling	18 Signor Foli
9 Madame Annie Grey	19 Durward Lely
10 Emily Squire	20 Iver M ^c Kay

One or two names are absent from this collection which ought to be present, but I shall doubtless add them in course of time. The "picture," however, is quite complete as it stands, and satisfies me immensely.

The undernoted is the list of autographs in "A Literary Group," which embraces Mr. Stead as representing periodical literature and Professor Sayce as representing biblical literature :—

1 M. E. Braddon	12 Robert Buchanan
2 "Edna Lyall"	13 Hall Caine
3 Annie S. Swan	14 W. T. Stead
4 Jules Verne	15 Duke of Argyll
5 O. W. Holmes	16 H. Rider Haggard
6 Professor Drummond	17 S. L. Clemens (Mark Twain)
7 Andrew Lang	18 Grant Allen
8 Professor Blackie	19 Dr George Macdonald
9 William Morris	20 Rev. W. J. Dawson
10 Professor Sayce	
11 George Augustus Sala	

I have compelled the contending divines of Christendom "to dwell together in unity" in my group of the "Leading Preachers of the Nineteenth Century"—rather a sweeping designation! They here repose peacefully side by

side, their strife forgotten. I have two sets—one representing Britain ; the other, America. Here is a selection from both :—

<i>Britain.</i>	<i>America.</i>
1 C. H. Spurgeon	1 Henry Ward Beecher
2 Dr. Andrew A. Bonar	2 Dr. Talmage
3 Dr. Dale	3 Bishop Phillip Brooks
4 Professor Cairns	4 Dr. Lyman Abbot
5 Dr. Whyte	5 Dr. John Hall
6 Canon Liddon	6 Dr. A. J. Gordon
7 Stopford A. Brooke	7 Dr. Wm. M. Taylor
8 Dr. Parker	8 Joseph Cook
9 Dr. MacLaren	9 Dr. Munger
10 Cardinal Manning	10 Dr. Cuyler
11 Dr. Morison	11 Professor Briggs
12 Archdeacon Farrar	12 Dr. Parkhurst
13 Dr. Hanna	13 Dr. Meredith
14 John M'Neill	14 Dr. Pentecost
15 Dr. Newman Hall	15 Dr. Pierson
16 Hugh Price Hughes	16 Dr. Van Dyke

A collection of "Eminent Musicians" was begun by me recently. It is not yet quite complete. I have succeeded, however, in securing such autographs as :—

1 Sir John Stainer	7 Mons. Alex. Guilmaut
2 Dr. Mackenzie	8 Bernhard Stavenhagen
3 Sir Charles Hallé	9 E. G. Ysaye
4 Dr. Joachim	10 Senor Sarasate
5 T. T. Padcrewski	11 Signor Piatti
6 August Manns	12 Dr. Richter

I intend to separate these ultimately into "Violinists" and "Pianists." Then must come "Composers."

Here are the autographs of a small unpretentious group of "Famous Actors," which must be enlarged:—

Wilson Barrett

Mrs Kendall

J. L. Toole

S. Baneroff

Mary Anderson

There are a number of smaller groups scattered over the house in appropriate frames. I may give a few specimens. The following is a group of "Three Eminent Doctors":—

Sir Morrell Maekenzie

Sir Andrew Clark

Sir William Jenner

Another brace of three is titled "A Radical Team," and includes:—

Henry Labouchere

Henry Broadhurst

Charles Bradlaugh

These “Eminent Expositors” also hold fellowship together :—

Professor Cheyne	Bishop of Durham
Bishop of Gloucester and	Dean Perowne
Bristol	

The great evangelists (Moody and Sankey) also find a place, with characteristic texts supplied by themselves :—

Daniel xii. 3.	Ira D. Sankey
P. L. Moody	Isa. xxxv. 10.

I have another small group of which I feel especially proud, as it represents Christianity and humanity in their tenderest form. It is called “The Friends of the Children,” and is composed of the autographs of the following founders of orphanages :—

George Muller	Dr. Barnardo
C. H. Spurgeon	Wm. Quarrier

It would be unpardonable did I omit to add my group of “Eminent Women”—a collection which I purpose making as wide and catholic as the air :—

1 Harriet Beecher Stowe	5 Countess of Aberdeen
2 Miss Braddon	6 Jean Ingelow
3 Miss Willard	7 Mrs Spurgeon
4 Josephine Butler	8 Lady Florence Dixie

The group of "Three Women Poets" must not be overlooked in this day of woman's rights. It consists of Jean Ingelow, Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton, and Miss Christina G. Rossetti, and carries itself with becoming grace.

Not the least interesting of my smaller groups, in a certain sense, is a collection of the autographs of soldiers who have been in engagements. It embraces a veteran of Waterloo, a member of the Light Brigade, and heroes of Lucknow, the Crimea, Ashantee, Afghanistan, and Tel-el-kebir.

I purpose shortly arranging a group of names associated with book collecting. I have already a few autographs in hand for the project.

The list of "Some Autograph Groups" is not yet exhausted; but these examples will serve to show how almost every nation and class has contributed to my enjoyment.

In addition to the groups, there are many

letters, post-cards, and autographs (framed singly) adorning the walls. In this groupless lot are found—Princess May, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Ibsen, Mr. Spurgeon, Canon Liddon, Dr. Talmage, M. de Lesseps, Dr. John G. Paton, “General” Booth, Dr. Samuel Smiles, Jean Ingelow, John G. Whittier, Marquis of Lorne, Mark Twain, W. G. Grace, Walter Crane, Dr. George Macdonald, etc., etc.

Lying in drawers and scrap books are also endless bundles of autographs, post-cards and letters. The mere list of these would form a fair catalogue. Many of them are duplicates—in some instances, I have several autographs of one individual. In these bundles the following, among others, are to be found:—*Politicians*—Lord Herschell, Lord Dalhousie, Mr Labouchere, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Professor Bryce, the Lord Advocate, Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, Sir Arthur Peel, Herbert Gladstone, Mr. Marjoribanks, etc. *Preachers*—C. H. Spurgeon, J. Guinness Rogers, Charles Garrett, David Macrae,

Dr. Stalker, Dr. Whyte, Dr. Culross, Dr. Angus, Principal Brown, Dr. Munro Gibson, Professor Godet, Dr. Bonar, Archdeacon Farrar, John M'Neil, Hay Aitken, Dr. Morison, Dr. Clifford, Dr. Landels, F. B. Meyer, B.A., Dean Hole, etc. *Musicians*—Dr. Mackenzie, August Manns, Dr. Joachim, Albert Bach, etc.. *Painters*—Birket Foster, Colin Hunter, A. Waterhouse, Philip Calderon, J. C. Horseley, etc. *Authors*—H. Rider Haggard, Annie S. Swan, Andrew Lang, Ellen Bayley, Professor Blackie, Charles Dickens, jr., Professor Drummond, Dr. Phillip Schaff, Sir Edwin Arnold, Dr. Robertson Nicoll, Alfred Austin, Alexander Ireland, etc. *Miscellaneous*—Mrs Henry Ward Beecher, Herbert Booth, Sir Wm. Thomson, Kate Greenaway, H. M. Stanley, J. Grant (explorer), Mrs Reaney, Walter Bentley, Lord Rosebery,* and a host “too numerous to mention.”

What an august assembly of distinguished

* I have “bagged” Lord Rosebery since the first sheets went to the press (see p. 14).

personages ! They are present, too, by virtue of their own choice to honour my humble abode. I sincerely hope they all feel at home ! They seem quite pleased in the company of each other, anyhow—there is no striving for places or standing on dignity. As becoming the rights of a host, I assign them their respective places at will, and thus, like the leaders of nations, move lords and ladies about according to my pleasure !

ODDS AND ENDS OF OBSERVATION.

“ I WILL not wind a lang conclusion.”

BURNS.

THERE are several odd items of interest which have been suggested to me in compiling the former chapters, but as I could not well fix them into appropriate niches I reserved them for a final chapter. Some of these I now throw together.

I have been struck with the curious fact that there is a "run" of luck in collecting which is quite unaccountable. I have, in one or two instances, sent off several letters at one time—say at the beginning of a week—and not a solitary reply has rewarded my effort. On another occasion I have repeated the experiment, and every letter brought a reply. Sometimes, if my first batch of letters failed, I have tried another in the same week, but all to no purpose—there seemed to be a conspiracy among the people to keep silence. Similarly, when my first batch of letters succeeded, I have

with due haste followed up with another, and the replies came back with unvarying regularity. I do not know how to account for this, but it became so manifest that, when I wished to collect a group, I wrote a letter or two as "feelers" before I ventured further.

I might note, too, as I have elsewhere hinted, that autographs are increasingly difficult to secure. When I began, refusals were very uncommon — indeed, I cannot recollect a single instance in which I was refused, or my letter was left unanswered, during my early experiences. Refusals came later on. This, of course, is easily accounted for by the fact that autograph-collecting has now become a wide-spread indulgence and collectors are multiplying daily. The consequence is that leading men and women are more pestered than they used to be. I ought to say, in fairness to present-day beginners, that this difficulty of obtaining autographs now forms no mean excuse for the tactics to which they are driven in order to

secure trophies—a temptation which did not always assail the collector. At the same time, these tactics have largely injured the chances of collecting.

I was not long in discovering that foreigners were more ready to give autographs than Britishers. This is probably not due to any extra graciousness in them—although it may—but rather to the fact that it is a greater compliment to be solicited from a distance than from a town close at hand. Americans, especially, are ready to favour a letter from Scotland. The only individual I failed with in America was Lowell, I think. France and Germany were also ready to respond. Jules Verne outdid all Frenchmen—indeed, all foreigners of every description—in politeness; but, like Mark Twain, he put me to “the test of double postage.”

Preachers, I found, were the easiest to approach, while artists exhibited the most

courtesy. Singers, too, were very obliging. Literary folks were hard to "bleed"—probably the hardest, as a class. Among politicians, Conservatives were more kindly than Liberals. Mr. Chamberlain has the distinction of being the only politician who sent a printed refusal ; Lord Rosebery the only one who sent a refusal written ; but the leading Liberals threw my application aside and took no notice of it whatever. Mr. Gladstone was a brilliant exception, and also Sir George Trevelyan ; but Sir William Harcourt, John Morley, and, indeed, all the other Liberal leaders, gave no attention, and I had to secure their autographs through a medium. On the other hand, all the Conservatives responded at once and courteously—Lord Salisbury, Mr Balfour, Sir Randolph Churchill, etc. As I happen to be a thorough-going Liberal, I make this confession with becoming humiliation !

Another, and last, curious observation which I made was the far-reaching influence of Burns.

In the specimens of letters which I have given, it will be seen that the name of Burns is the one most frequently mentioned. Two R.A.'s (Mr. Hamo Thornycroft and Mr. Faed) referred to him rapturously; Professor Blackie quoted him alongside of Paul; and Mr. Lyman Abbot placed him first in the list of eminent Scotsmen—Bruce, Wallace, Walter Scott, and John Knox, following after. In sending me his autograph, the Rev. David Macrae of Dundee enclosed a verse of "A Man's a Man for a' That." The fact of my then residing in Ayr, the birthplace of Burns, may have suggested his name to the various writers; but the enthusiasm they manifest is unmistakable. And so my collection of autographs, if it has done nothing else, has demonstrated the fulfilment of the prophecy said to have been uttered at the birth of Scotia's Bard—

" He'll hae misfortunes great an' sma',
But aye a heart aboon them a';
He'll be a credit 'till us a',
We'll a' be prood o' Robin."

THE END.

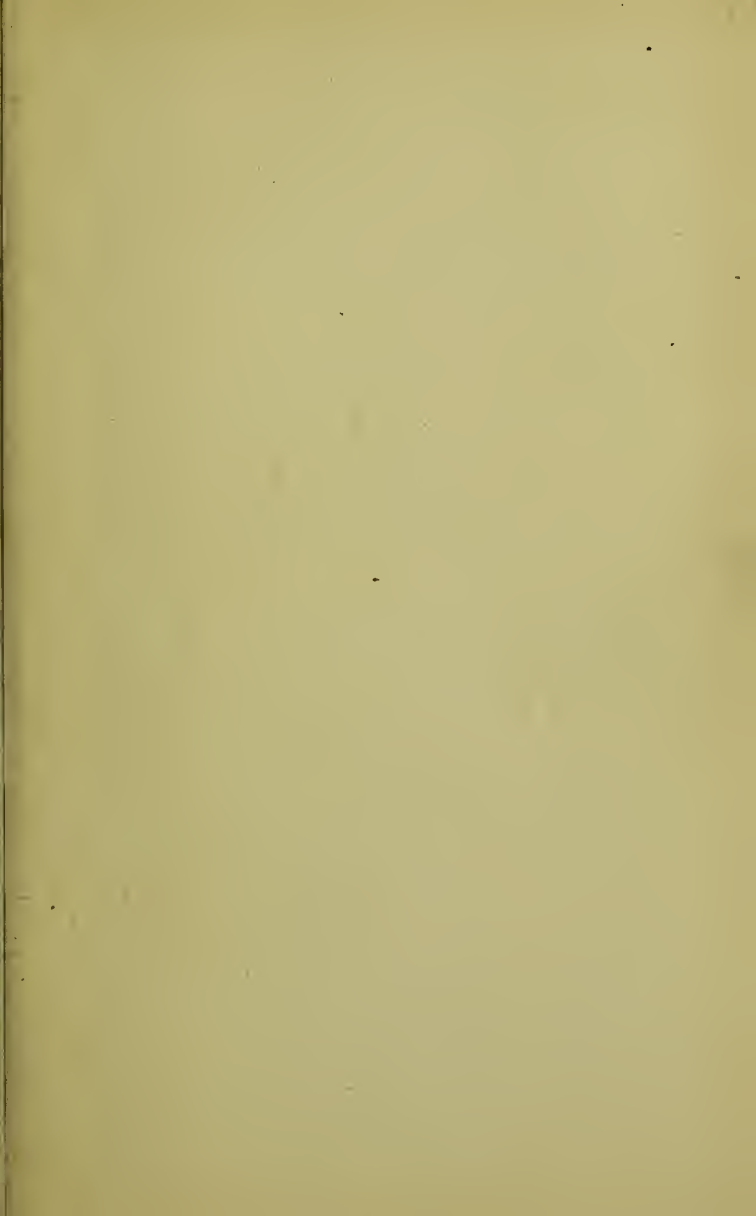
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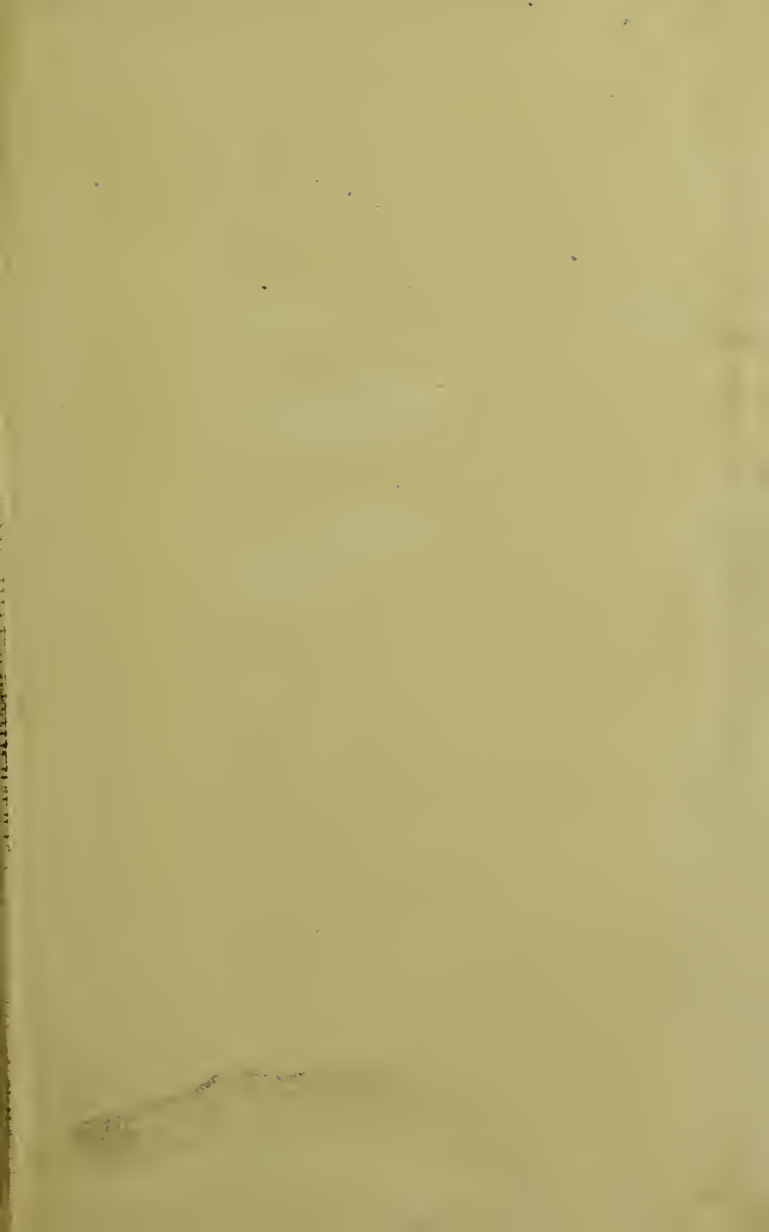
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